



STATE OF WASHINGTON

COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS

COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Testimony to Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission

September 13, 2004

Leo Gaeta,
Chair

Yvonne
Lopez-Morton,
Vice Chair

Diana Avalos,
Executive Committee

Homero Tamez,
Executive Committee

Gabriel Banfi

Faviola Barbosa

Karla Padilla-Reyna

Gabriel Portugal

Rebecca Villareal

Ruben Baca

Uriel Iñiguez,
Acting Executive
Director

Chairman Fisher and members of the Commission, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs is tasked by the people of the State of Washington with advising the Governor, the Legislature, and the state and local agencies on issues of concern to the Hispanic community. The Commission takes this opportunity to advise the Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission (A+ Commission) on the issues surrounding the **Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)**.

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs continues to address the concerns of Hispanic student graduation rate and academic achievement in Washington State. Despite the minimal rise in graduation rate and adequate yearly progress of Hispanic students in Washington State, Hispanic students are still lagging behind in comparison to other student groups. Overall, the gap has not decreased over the years. It is true that the gap decreases from last year on all of the categories, except math, but the differences are still too wide. It should be pointed out that the 03-04 tests were the first time that the gap decreased. All of the years before, the gap had increased- from a low of 17 percentage points in 97-98, 7th. grade math, to a high of 31.8 in 02-03, 4th. grade reading. From what the Superintendent of Public Instruction said on September 1, 2004 she made it sound like we had just discovered a new source of energy, but the matter of the fact is that we still have a long ways to go for anybody to be doing any kind of celebration. The current, 2003-04 WASL test scores achievement gap, range from 23.8 to 30.1 percentage points. The chart below illustrates the percentage of students who passed the WASL and the achievement GAP between Hispanic and White students:

2003-04 Washington Sate Report Card

Grade	Test	Hispanic Score	White Score	GAP
4	Math	38.8%	66.1%	27.3
4	Reading	53.9	79.9	26.0
4	Writing	36.4	60.2	23.8
7	Math	22.2	52.3	30.1
7	Reading	38.1	65.7	27.6
7	Writing	38.9	61.9	23.0
8	Science	16	45.4	29.4
10	Math	19.6	49.2	29.6
10	Reading	41.3	69.5	28.2
10	Writing	42.5	69.7	27.2

1210 Eastside St. 1st Floor PO Box 40924 Olympia, WA 98504-0924
Toll-Free: (800) 443-0294 Olympia: (360) 753-3159 Fax: (360) 753-0199
www.cha.wa.gov hispanic@cha.wa.gov

10	Science	11.4	37.4	26.3
----	---------	------	------	------

Based on the fact that ethnically diverse students represent at least 28.55% (2003) of the student population in Washington state, the Commission on Hispanic Affairs shares similar, if not the same concerns as other educational associations and ethnic minority communities regarding WASL cut scores, WASL high school exit test, and the lack of ethnic minority representation on the review panels, working committees, and decision making boards.

We are specifically concerned about the lack of ethnic minority representation on the cut score review panels. It is our understanding that OSPI had assured the A+ Commission that 60 members would be recruited for each panel; in part to assure broad and diverse representation. In reviewing the committees, it appears that there was significant under-representation of ethnic minorities. The chart below illustrates the subgroup composition of the panels:

PANEL	Members	Afr-Am.	Am.Ind.	Asian	E.Ind.	Hispanic
4 th . Reading	18	2	0	2	0	0
4 th . Math	14	1	2	0	0	0
4 th . Writing	16	1	0	1	0	0
7 th . Reading	17	3	0	0	0	0
7 th . Math	16	1	1	1	1	0
7 th . Writing	18	1	0	0	0	0
10 th . Reading	25	1	0	0	0	2
10 th . Math	21	1	1	0	0	2
10 th . Writing	26	2	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	171	13	4	4	1	4
PERCENTAGE	15.2%	7.6%	2.3%	2.3%	.58%	2.3%

The Commission on Hispanic Affairs would support a cut score model to ensure the highest possible pass rate for all students on the first administration of the 10th grade WASL. The Commission urges the A+ Commission to choose a model that gives maximum educational opportunity to earn a Washington State diploma. The Commission also supports additional funding and best practices to provide resources and assistance to help every student meet mastery and gain a Washington State diploma. The A+ Commission should re-examine and set goals for improving the graduation rate for all subpopulations.

WHEREAS, the education of our children is the great equalizer- the Commission urges the A+ Commission to continue examining the educational barriers confronting our students, and to seek solutions in order to give every child an equal opportunity to an education. Thank you very much for your time.